

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [The Author](#)

Nyingmapa Defences of Hashang Mahāyāna in the Eighteenth Century

by Sam van Schaik

This is an updated version of the article that originally appeared in Buddhist Studies Review 20.2 (2003): 189-204.[\[1\]](#)

1. Simultaneism, gradualism and polemics

A controversy over two apparently opposed approaches to enlightenment runs throughout the history of Tibetan Buddhist thought. Broadly stated, the first position, “the simultaneous approach” (*cig car gyi ‘jug pa*) was that the cessation of dualistic conceptualisation in meditation was sufficient cause for enlightenment, without any need for the graduated, and much more lengthy, practices of the six *pāramitā*. On the other hand, the second position, “the gradual approach” (*rim gyis ‘jug pa*) was that those practices were indispensable.[\[2\]](#)

The conflict between these two approaches was, according to Tibetan tradition, settled in the eighth century in a formal debate. Whether the debate actually occurred as such has been called into doubt, but there is no question of the importance of the legend of the debate to the Tibetan tradition. According to the Tibetan histories, the debate was arranged in Samyé temple in the late eighth century to determine whether Tibet would accept Indian or Chinese Buddhism as normative.[\[3\]](#) In the stories of the debate, the Indian side was identified with gradualism and the Chinese side with simultaneism, a greatly simplified version of the complexities of early Buddhist influences on Tibet which nonetheless became widely accepted in Tibet. According to tradition, the Indian Buddhist scholar Kamalaśīla, arguing for the gradualist position, opposed an Chinese monk called Hashang Mahāyāna, who was arguing for the simultaneist position. In the Tibetan versions of the story, Hashang was defeated, and his method rejected.[\[4\]](#)

For Tibetan scholars of later generations, Hashang Mahāyāna came to be an emblem for a particular kind of erroneous doctrine, the belief in an simultaneous realisation caused by the mere cessation of concepts (*mi rtog pa* or *mi bsam pa*), which became a standard object of rebuttal. Later, Hashang’s defeat was put to polemical use against certain Tibetan practice traditions, in particular the Mahāmudrā (*phyag chen*) of the bKa’ brgyud school and the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) of the Nyingma school.[\[5\]](#) The Great Perfection’s teachings on technique free meditation were subject to accusations of being no more than the simultaneous method of Hashang. Nyingma scholars were often forced to defend the validity of the Great Perfection against this accusation in polemical texts. The following

passage by Khedrupjé (1385-1438) is a good example of the kind of criticisms levelled against Nyingma practitioners:

Many who hold themselves to be meditators of the Snow mountains [of Tibet] talk, in exalted cryptic terms, of theory free from all affirmation, of meditative realisation free from all mentation, of [philosophical] practice free from all denial and assertion and of a fruit free from all wishes and qualms. And they imagine that understanding is born in the conscious stream when - because in a state where there is no mentation about anything at all there arises something like non-identification of anything at all - one thinks that there exists nothing that is either identical or different. By so doing one has proclaimed great nihilism where there is nothing to be affirmed according to a doctrinal system of one's own, as well as the thesis of the Hashang in which nothing can be the object of mentation.[6]

In view of this kind of criticism it is perhaps surprising that some Nyingma writers, rather than simply defending themselves against such accusations by distancing their own teachings from those of Hashang Mahāyāna, attempted to make a more balanced judgement of the simultaneist doctrine and sometimes went so far as to express their approval of it. Rather than repeating the standard presentations of Hashang's beliefs as a misguided straying from the true path, as most were content to do, certain Nyingma scholars continued to engage with the problem of simultaneous versus gradual approaches, and its relationship to their own Great Perfection practices.

This article is an examination of the treatment of Hashang by two eighteenth-century writers. The first is Katog Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), who deals with the teachings of Hashang Mahāyāna in his history of the Chinese simultaneist school. The second is Jigmé Lingpa (1730-1798), in whose *Kun mkhyen zhal lung*, a discourse on the “three liberations” of the Great Perfection, there is an annotation defending Hashang. This annotation, along with an even more brief comment by Longchenpa (1308-1363), has been taken by some as evidence of the Nyingma school's longstanding connection with Chan Buddhism.[7] In fact, these eighteenth-century texts tell us little or nothing about the original connections between the Great Perfection and Chan, but a great deal about Nyingma scholars' attempts to deal with the perceived connection. As will be seen, these two scholars deal with it in quite different ways, but I will suggest that they share a similar motivation, connected to the political events in central Tibet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

2. Katog Tsewang Norbu

Katog Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755) was the head of Katog monastery, and ranks as one of the most impressive scholars of eighteenth-century Tibet. His studies took in both the texts of the Nyingma and those of the new schools; he exchanged Nyingma for Kagyü teachings with the Twelfth Karmapa, Byang chub rDo rje (1703-1732),^[8] and wrote a history of the transmission of Mahāmudrā. Tsewang Norbu studied and championed the forbidden Jo nang doctrines, writing several works on the “empty of other” (*gzhan stong*) theory and on the *Kālacakra tantra*, the source of “empty of other” in the tantric corpus. He also wrote some non-religious works on history and geography and travelled widely, making several journeys to Nepal.^[9]

In his *Sa bon tsam smos pa*,^[10] a study of the Chinese lineage which begins with Bodhidharma and includes Hashang Mahāyāna, Tsewang Norbu makes use of a number of old sources including the then rare ninth-century treatise *A Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation* (*bSam gtan mig sgron*) by Nub Sangyé Yeshé. Tsewang Norbu cites two statements from *The Eyes of Contemplation*. The first is that it is important to write about the simultaneous path because of its similarities with the Great Perfection, which could

cause a mistaken identification of the two. The second and more controversial statement is that the path of Hashang Mahāyāna is a pure path.^[11] In *A Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation* itself, the simultaneous path is ranked above the gradualist path, but below the Vajrayāna and the Great Perfection. This is the model followed by Tsewang Norbu, who stresses that the simultaneous path is based on the sutras, specifically, on the sutras of the third turning of the wheel. He defends this statement against the objection that, according to all of the sutras, enlightenment is achieved only after a number of incalculable aeons, with a quotation from the Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* sutra:

If one who is skilled in means applies himself diligently to this sutra, that sage will reach perfect enlightenment, unsurpassable and totally pure, before very long.^[12]

Having established the legitimacy of the simultaneous path, Tsewang Norbu is keen to show that it is inferior to the Vajrayāna. He states that when the sutras speak of buddhahood, it is intentional, and goes on to discuss the progress towards the goal according to the Pāramitāyāna (or sūtra path) and Vajrayāna (or mantra path).

Having initially travelled the paths of accumulation and application by the sutra path alone, at the stage of attaining the first *bhūmi* most enter the mantra path. Those who do not enter do exist, but after the eighth *bhūmi*, where one is initiated by the Teachers, they will have entered into mindfulness under their own power without relying on external conditions in the manner of the mantra path. Thus although we teach the importance of entering the mantra path rather than the sutra path, from the level of the eighth *bhūmi* onwards one is on the path of the initiation into the state of awareness where there is no opportunity to negate or purify. This is the case whichever the original entrance gate, sutra or mantra, but because one need practise for a shorter time with mantra, the time when one attains the fruit of perfect and totally pure buddhahood is the distinction between sutra and mantra. There is no difference in the buddhahood itself, so there is no harm in the indirect teachings.^[13]

Tsewang Norbu's position is that whether one starts on the sutra or mantra path is irrelevant from the point of view of the goal. It is possible to progress through all ten *bhūmis* on the sutra path, but from the eighth *bhūmi* onwards the practitioner is in effect on the mantra path. The benefit of entering the mantra path at the first *bhūmi* is that one will attain the goal more swiftly. Tsewang Norbu apparently ignores certain characteristics of the simultaneist doctrine of Hashang in order to fit it to the model of the standard Pāramitāyāna. In contrast to an orderly progression through the ten *bhūmis*, Hashang is said to have spoken of direct access to the tenth *bhūmi*.^[14] Tsewang Norbu seems to be aware that this treatment is not altogether adequate: remarking on its brevity, he writes that there is no need to elaborate further merely for the sake of a few doubts.^[15]

Tsewang Norbu also touches on the contemporary situation in the following passage:

Even today in China there are Hashangs of the Chan school who teach only in the *tsung men* style.^[16] Here in Tibet too, there are a declining few who assert that one should from the beginning aim for the deep inner meaning, saying: "Listen to the instructions on the mind without distinguishing discipline and wildness." However they have no more than a partial similarity to each other.^[17]

Tsewang Norbu appears to be pointing to certain contemporary Great Perfection and Mahāmudrā teachers who spurn the gradual path - with the interesting aside that these types are in decline. His main point is that there is no more than a partial similarity between the Chinese and the Tibetan teachers. Tsewang Norbu's opinion is that the Chinese teachers abandon the stages of hearing and contemplating (*thos bsam*) and make

meditation (*bsam gtan*) the entire path, while the Great Perfection contains all three stages. As evidence for the presence of gradual stages in the Great Perfection he invokes the scriptural authority of the *Union of the Sun and Moon* (*Nyi zla kha spyor*), one of the *Seventeen Tantras*, in which, he says, seven stages of activity are taught as well as the one essential point which encompasses them.^[18]

Finally, Tsewang Norbu also sets down what he sees as the correct use of the terms “simultaneist” and “gradualist”. He argues that, while the Chinese Hashangs distinguish between two types of practitioner, the simultaneist and the gradualist, there is no such distinction found in the Indian teachings which came to Tibet. The only true simultaneists are those Chinese Hashangs and their disciples:

Thus past figures like the great monk Ye shes dbang po-a disciple of the Indian abbot Śāntarakṣita-are known as *gradualists* because they practised the famous three ways to knowledge.^[19] The disciples of the Chinese abbot Mahāyāna are known as *simultaneists* because they applied themselves to contemplation alone.^[20]

Tsewang Norbu believes that to use the terms simultaneist and gradualist within the context of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism is an error. Simultaneism is a Chinese phenomenon, unknown to the mainstream Indo-Tibetan tradition. Thus his position is ultimately an orthodox one, although, like Nub Sangyé Yeshé, he does not reject the simultaneous path of Chan, rather he merely attempts to put it in its proper place.

3. Jigmé Lingpa

Jigmé Lingpa (1730-1729) has an important place in the Nyingma tradition as the redactor of a very popular treasure cycle, the *Longchen Nyingtig*, as the author of a comprehensive exposition of the Buddhist path as it is known to the Nyingma school, the *Treasury of Qualities* (*Yon tan mdzod*), and as the editor of one of the best editions of the collected tantras of the Nyingma school. In most of his endeavours he saw himself as reviving the activities of the great fourteenth-century scholar Longchenpa (1308-1353). The *Longchen Nyingtig* cycle contains several tantras and *sādhana*s, which said to derive from the eighth century, as well as numerous commentaries upon these texts, the authorship of which is claimed by Jigmé Lingpa himself. In one of these commentaries, called *The Oral Teachings of the Omniscient One* (*Kun mkhyen zhal lung*), Jigmé Lingpa attempts a response to the criticism that the Great Perfection is equivalent to the non-conceptualisation taught by Hashang Mahayana.

Jigmé Lingpa’s differentiation of the two approaches is based on the distinction, particular to the Instruction Series (*man ngag sde*) of the Great Perfection, between *sems*, the samsaric, conceptual mind (*sems*), and nirvanic, non-conceptual awareness (*rig pa*). The meditation practices of the Instruction Series found in the *Longchen Nyingtig* proceed on the basis of this distinction, which comes from the earliest Instruction Series scriptures, the *Seventeen Tantras*.^[21] Therefore it is not surprising that Jigmé Lingpa insists upon the importance of the distinction. He argues that, if the meditator attempts to stop conceptual activity without distinguishing between mind (*sems*) and awareness (*rig pa*), the result is a blank indeterminacy (*lung ma bstan*). In awareness, he argues, conceptualisation is neutralised in a state that is “like a crystal ball”, a simile which points to clarity and vividness, rather than indeterminacy and blankness.^[22]

Jigmé Lingpa’s insistence on this distinction between the the simultaneist doctrine and the Great Perfection makes the note he attaches to the above passage quite surprising. Stepping outside of the standard model of accusation and rebuttal, he goes on to defend Hashang:

You have made the assertion that the view of Hashang[23] was like this, based on refutations such as the similarity of non-mentation to an egg.[24] Yet scriptures such as the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* were known to Hashang. During the debate, Kamalāśīla asked what was the cause of *saṃsāra* by the symbolic action of whirling his staff around his head. [Hashang] answered that it was the apprehender and apprehended by the symbolic action of shaking his robe out twice.[25] It is undeniable that such a teacher was of the sharpest faculties. If the non-recollection and non-mentation entail the offense of rejecting the wisdom of differentiating analysis, then the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* of the Conqueror also entail this fault. Therefore, what the view of Hashang actually was can be known by a perfect buddha, and no one else.[26]

In his defence of Hashang, Jigmé Lingpa had a precedent in the works of Longchenpa. In one section of his *Heart of the Threefold Bliss (sDe gsum snying po)*, Longchenpa writes on the subject of the transcendence of the consequences of positive and negative actions in the context of Great Perfection practice. There is a famous statement attributed to Hashang Mahāyāna on this same subject, that virtue and sin are like black and white clouds, in that both cover up the sun. Rather than distancing himself from this, Longchenpa uses the same metaphor, and then goes on to say:

When the great master Hashang said this, those of lesser intellects could not comprehend it, but he was in accordance with the [ultimate] truth.[27]

Jigmé Lingpa held Longchenpa in great reverence and was certainly familiar with the *Heart of the Threefold Bliss*. Longchenpa himself was also following a precedent, set by the twelfth-century Nyingmapa Nyangral Nyima Özer (1124-1192), in his *Heart of the Flower: a Dharma History (Chos 'byung me tog snying po)*. In this version of the debate between simultaneist and gradualist approaches the Tibetan emperor himself states that there is no ultimate difference between the two paths, but that for those of the best faculties (*dbang po*, skt. *indriya*), there is the simultaneous method of Hashang, and for those of medium and below there is the graduated path.[28]

It is interesting to note that, in categorizing Hashang as a particularly astute practitioner of a bygone era, Longchenpa and Jigmé Lingpa are treating him in the same way as they treat the early Indian masters of the Vajrayāna lineages of the Nyingma school. An example of the way these early Indian masters are categorized is found in another of Jigmé Lingpa's explanatory texts from the *Longchen Nyingtig*:

Those trainees of the very sharpest faculties like Garab rDorjé, Self-arisen Padmasambhava and Indrabhūti, who were lords of the *maṇḍala* while seeming to be ordinary students, were spontaneously liberated upon hearing, but gradualist people will not reach the goal in that way. So in this situation there is some further striving for complete liberation.[29]

In this, once again, Jigmé Lingpa is following Longchenpa's lead, as the following passage by Longchenpa shows:

The great *yogis* who arrived at that state [of enlightenment], like Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Telopa, taught directly, without cause and effect, virtue or sin. Even if we understand this intellectually we have not reached it through becoming truly accustomed to it, so we are taught it after we have distinguished the subtle aspects of cause and effect and are no longer afraid of that state.[30]

Jigmé Lingpa uses the distinctions between the faculties of trainees in his *Longchen Nyingtig* texts as a way of placing the simultaneous aspects of the Great Perfection beyond the reach

of contemporary practitioners. The simultaneous actualisation of the Great Perfection is stated to be possible only for those of the sharpest faculties, and Jigmé Lingpa makes it clear that in his view such types are very rare nowadays, if any exist at all. This qualification would also put the simultaneist path of Hashang, described by Jigmé Lingpa as being for those of the sharpest faculties only, in a purely theoretical role.

Thus Longchenpa and Jigmé Lingpa seem to have been tempted to place Hashang, as an individual, in the same category as the great masters of the Indian lineage who are said to have achieved enlightenment in an immediate fashion. However, the simultaneist approach of Hashang is, by this same move, placed outside the realm of possibility for ordinary practitioners. In this, as we have seen, Jigmé Lingpa is restating themes from Longchenpa's works. Perhaps Jigmé Lingpa's really original contribution in the *Kun mkhyen zhal lung* is his contention that there is a scriptural basis for the simultaneous path as much as for the gradual path in the *Prajñāparamitā* sutras, an insight which appears to be based on comparative readings of texts, rather than the standardised rubrics of Tibetan scholarship.

4. Comparisons

Jigmé Lingpa and Tsewang Norbu represent two different approaches to the simultaneist teachings of Hashang Mahāyāna. The first approach, represented by Longchenpa and Jigmé Lingpa, treats Hashang Mahāyāna more as an individual than as the representative of a school, and suggests that his realisation might be equal to the realisation of a Great Perfection practitioner. [31] They imply that the simultaneous method followed by Hashang is similar to the approach of the early Great Perfection and Mahāmudrā masters such as Vimalamitra and Telopa. However, this method is said to be beyond the reach of most, if not all, contemporary practitioners.

The second approach, that of Nub Sangyé Yeshé and Tsewang Norbu, is to deal with Hashang Mahāyāna as the representative of a Chinese school of Buddhism which he calls simultaneism (*cig char 'jug pa*), *tsen min*, or the teaching of the Chan masters (*bsam gtan gyi mkhan po*). This school is accepted to represent a valid method, which is placed in a hierarchy where it has a status higher than the gradual path but lower than the higher tantras of the Vajrayāna and the Great Perfection.

Jigmé Lingpa's approach is based on what might be called a yogic point of view, wherein the individual paths are seen from the perspective of the goal, ultimate truth, and there is an emphasis on the individual realisation of the exponents of these paths rather than the categorisation of their doctrines. Tsewang Norbu's approach is primarily doxographic, and the aim is the classic scholarly Tibetan one of ranking different paths into an inclusive hierarchy. The Great Perfection, and other Tibetan teachings, are protected from contamination by more questionable doctrines.

Neither Jigmé Lingpa nor Tsewang Norbu make any attempt to identify Great Perfection with the simultaneous path. In fact both writers are careful to distance the approach of the Great Perfection of their time from the eighth-century simultaneism of Hashang Mahāyāna, and Tsewang Norbu also takes care to make the distinction between the Great Perfection and the Chinese Chan teachings of his own time. For Tsewang Norbu, the Great Perfection is inherently a gradual path, and simultaneism is restricted to the Chinese Chan schools. For Jigmé Lingpa, the Great Perfection can be a simultaneous path, but only for the those of the very sharpest faculties, and he makes it clear that few if any contemporary practitioners fall into this category; thus his position is actually very close to that of Tsewang Norbu.

There remains the question of why these two eighteenth-century Nyingma writers, both aware of the criticisms of the Great Perfection from other schools which had occurred through the preceding centuries should open themselves to further criticism by discussing

the doctrines of Hashang in any sort of positive light at all. Both Jigmé Lingpa and Tsewang Norbu were writing within a tradition of openness towards these doctrines, supported by the writings of past scholars from their school. While Tsewang Norbu's interest in early sources brought him to the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, Jigmé Lingpa's general enthusiasm for what was unique in the doctrines of the Nyingma brought him to the comments on Hashang Mahāyāna by Longchenpa. Thus both were maintaining what they saw as the particular approach of the Nyingma tradition to this matter.

Such a motivation may be seen as arising from the developments in the seventeenth century, when the monastic presence of the Nyingma school dramatically increased in Tibet, and certain influential figures such as Terdag Lingpa (1646-1714) and Lochen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717) gathered together and standardized a corpus of Nyingma texts. On the other hand, the Nyingma was also subject to considerable persecution at the hands of the Dzungar invaders, who sacked several of the monasteries in Tibet and killed many of the lamas, including Lochen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717).^[32] Some kind of persecution continued through to the lifetimes of Jigmé Lingpa and Katog Tsewang Norbu; the latter composed a letter written to the Seventh Dalai Lama, dated at around 1750, which makes a plea for an end to the persecution of the Nyingma.^[33] The combination of an increasing confidence and self-consciousness within the Nyingma school, and intermittent persecutions, suggest a climate in which Nyingma writers would be motivated to preserve and support the unique and unusual aspects of their own school.

Bibliography:

Faber, F. 1985. 'A Tibetan Dunhuang Treatise on Simultaneous Enlightenment: The *dMyigs su myed pa tshul gcig pa'i gzhung*' in *Acta Orientalia* 46, pp47-77.

Faber, F. 1986. 'The Council of Tibet According to the *sBa bzhed*' in *Acta Orientalia* 47, pp33-61.

Gomez, L.O. 1983. 'Indian Materials on the Doctrine of Sudden Enlightenment', in Lai, Whalen and Lancaster, Lewis (eds.). *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*. Berkley, California: Berkley Buddhist Studies Series, pp393-434.

Guenther, H.V. 1989. *Tibetan Buddhism in a Western Perspective*. Emeryville, California: Dharma Publishing.

Houston, G. 1974. 'The bSam yas Debate: According to the rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long', in *Central Asiatic Journal* 18, pp209-216.

Karmay, S.G. 1988. *The Great Perfection (rDzogs Chen)*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Jackson, D.P. 1994. *Enlightenment by Single Means*. Vienna, Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Meizezahl, R.O. 1985. *Die große Geschichte des tibetischen Buddhismus nach alter Tradition rÑin ma'i chos 'byuñ chen mo*. Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.

Seyfort Ruegg, D.S. 1989. *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism*. London: SOAS.

Seyfort Ruegg, D.S. 1992. 'On the Historiography and Doxography of the 'Great Debate of bSam yas'', Ihara, Shoren (ed.). 1992. *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (Narika 1989)*. Tokyo: Naritisan Shinshoji.

Smith, E.G. 1969. Preface. In *The Autobiographical Reminiscences of Ngag-dDang dPal-bZang, Late Abbot of Kah-Thog Monastery* [Ngagyur Nyingmay Sungrab series], edited by Sonam T. Kazi. Gangtok.

Stein, R.A. 1987. 'Sudden Illumination or Simultaneous Comprehension', in Gregory, Peter N. (ed.). *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp41-66. [This is a translation by Neil Donner of "Illumination subite ou simultanée, note sur la terminologie chinoise et tibétaine", *Annales du Musée Guimet (Revue de l'histoire des religions)*CLXXX (1971), pp.3-30]

Tucci, G. 1978. *Minor Buddhist Texts (part I & II)*. Rinsen Book Company.

TIBETAN TEXTS

Ka' thog rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu

The Collected Works (gSuñ 'bum) of Ka'-thog Rig-'dzin Chen-po Tshe dBaṅ-nor-bu (6 vols.). Dalhousie, H.P, India, 1977.

rGya nag Hashang gi byung tshul grub mtha'i phyogs snga bcas sa bon tsam smos pa (vol.V pp419-450).

Klong chen rab 'byams pa dri med 'od zer

mDzod bdun (7 vols). Edited by the Yeshe De Project. India, 1992.

sDe gsum snying po don 'grel gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod(vol.VII, pp51-347).

'Jigs med gling pa

Klong chen snying tig. (3 vols). Edited by Ngawang Sopa. New Delhi, 1973.

rDo rje'i tshig rkang gi don 'grel kun mkhyen zhal lung(vol.III (*hum*), pp520-546).

rDo rje theg pa smin grol lam gyi rim pa las 'phros pa'i man ngag gi rgyab brten padma dkar po (vol.III (*hum*), pp463-516);

rDzogs pa chen po klong chen snying tig gi gdod ma'i mgon po'i lam gyi rim pa'i khrid yig ye shes bla ma (vol.III (*hum*), pp293-463)

gNubs sangs rgyas ye shes

rNal 'byor mig gi bSam gtan or bSam gtan mig sgron. Edited by 'Khor-gdon gTer-sprul Chi-med-rig-'dzin. Leh, 1974.

Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer

Chos 'byung me tog snying po. Facsimile in Meisezahl 1985.

Author Unknown

Rnying ma'i rgyud bcu bdun, A 'dzom chos sgar redaction (3 vols.). Edited by Sanje Dorje. New Delhi, 1973-1977.

sBa bzhed. Edited by mGon po rgyal mtshan. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrung khang, 1982.

Names in phonetic transliteration and Wylie transcription:

Garab Dorjé	dGa' rab rDo rje
Hashang Mahāyāna	Hwa shang Ma hā yan
Jigmé Lingpa	'Jigs med gling pa
Kagyü	Bka' brgyud
Katog Tsewang Norbu	Ka' thog tse dbang nor bu
Khedrupjé	Mkhas grub rje

Lochen Dharmaśrī	Lo chen Dharmaśrī
Longchenpa	Klong chen pa
Nub Sangyé Yeshé	gNubs sangs rgyas ye shes
Nyangral Nyima Özer	Nyang ral nyi ma ‘od zer
Nyingma	Rnying ma
Samye	Bsam yas
Terdag Lingpa	gTer bdag gLing pa

Footnotes

[1] Since the current version of this article has undergone several minor changes, citations should be to **Sam van Schaik. 2007. “The Great Perfection and the Chinese Monk: rNyingmapa defences of Hwashang Mahāyāna in the Eighteenth Century”.** <http://earlytibet.com>. I would like to thank Dan Martin for his useful suggestions, which lead to some of these changes.

[2] In this context, “simultaneous” indicates that all methods are encompassed by a single method, and all stages of realisation are traversed at once. The secondary signification is a time-based distinction: immediate, sudden accomplishment versus gradual, slow accomplishment. The Chinese words are *tun-wu* (gradual enlightenment) and *chien-wu* (simultaneous enlightenment), the respective schools of thought being *tun-men* and *chien-men*. These terms and their translation has been discussed in Stein 1987, pp46-51.

[3] On the questions regarding the historical occurrence of the debate, see Gomez 1983 and Ruegg 1992, which also summarize previous discussions of this topic. Whatever the debate occurred as a historical event or not, the stories of the debate had particular symbolic significance for later generations of Tibetans.

[4] In this article I use the Tibetan version of the name of this Chinese monk, because we are dealing here with the Tibetan discussion of the Tibetan version of the monk’s teachings. The name in pinyin transcription would be Heshang Moheyan. On the evidence for the actual teachings of Moheyan, which are subtler than the Tibetan tradition ever acknowledged, see Gomez 1983.

[5] One early and influential polemical statement is found in the Sa skya Paṇḍita’s (1182-1251) treatise *sDom gsum rab byed*, which criticised the teaching of a doctrine of simultaneous realisation called “the white panacea” (*dkar po cig thub*) in Mahāmudrā. There have been several discussion of this subject, of which perhaps the best are Seyfort Ruegg 1989 and Jackson 1994.

[6] Translation in Ruegg 1981, p223. The text is the *sTong thun skal bzang mig byed*, f.152, in volume *ka* of the *gSung ‘bum* (Zhol edition). mKhas grub rje’s presentation of the faulty doctrine in terms of view, meditation, activity and fruit identifies it as the Great Perfection, as these are standard definitions of the Great Perfection found in many of the texts of that system. The polemics directed against the Great Perfection are also discussed in Karmay 1988, pp121-133, 178-184, 186-189, 195-197. See also Jackson 1994, p53 n.118, on Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po’s defence of the Great Perfection.

[7] The passage by Klong chen pa is in his *sDe gsum snying po*, a commentary to the *gNas lugs rin po che’i mdzod*, from the *mDzod bdun* collection. This passage is used to show rNying ma and Chan affinities in Guenther 1989, pp140-141, n.2 and Karmay 1988, p96.

[8] Thinley 1980, p114.

[9\]](#) Smith 1969, pp8-9.

[10\]](#) *rGya nag Hwashang gi byung tshul grub mtha'i phyogs snga bcas sa bon tsam smos pa: Collected Works*, vol.V pp419-450.

[11\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos pap*434: dgos pa ni rdzogs chen dang cha 'dra bas mi nor ba'i tshad du yin par gsung ba dang/ Hwashang gi chos de yang yang dag pa'i lam du bzhed pa'o//

[12\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos papp*435-436: de bas na shin tu thabs mkhas pas mdo sde 'di la brtson 'grus su nan tan byas na skyes bu de ni ring por mi thogs par bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub par 'gyur ro//

[13\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos pap*.437: thog mar tshogs sbyor gyi lam mdo lam 'ba' zhig pas bsgrod nas sa dang po thob pa'i skabs su sngags lam la 'jug par shas che zhing gal te tshul ston gyi dbang gi sa brgyad pa'i bar du mi 'jug pa dag yod srid kyang sa brgyad pa nas gzhan rkyen la ltos pa ma yin par sngags kyi ngang tshul rang stobs kyi shes bzhin du 'jug tu yod pa yin pas des na mdo lam du sngags la 'jug dgos so zhes la bstan kyang sa bgyad pa yan chad nas ngang gi shes pa'i dbang gi lam la 'tshang pa dang chad pa'i go skabs med la/ gzhan yang thog ma'i 'jug sgo mdo sngags gang yin kyang rtung mthar sngags la gzhol dgos pas yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi 'bras bu thob tshe mdo sngags tha dad kyi sangs rgyas bye du med pa'i phyir de ltar dgongs te gsungs pas skyon med pa'o//

[14\]](#) *sBa bzhed*, p68 and other sources. See Faber 1986 pp47-48.

[15\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos pap*437.

[16\]](#) *tsung men* is one of the Tibetan transliterations of Chinese *chien min*.

[17\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos pap*438: da lta yang rgya nag tu bsam gtan mkhan hva shang tshung men rnam tshul kho na yin 'dug la/ bod 'dir yang btsun pa dang khyim pa ris su med par sems khrid nod do zhes thog ma nas zab mo nang don la gzhol bar 'dod pa phal cher 'di nyams kyang de dang cha mthun pa las gzhan du ma dmigs so//

[18\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos pap*438.

[19\]](#) The three ways to knowledge (*shes rab gsum*) are the classic trio of listening (*thos pa*), thinking (*bsam pa*) and meditating (*sgom pa*).

[20\]](#) *Sa bon tsam smos pap*439: des na sngon gya gar mkhan po zhi ba 'cho yi rjes su brangs ba bandhe chen po ye shes dbang po la sogs pas shes rab gsum bsgrags mar mdzad pa la brten rim gyis pa dang rgya nag mkhan po ma ha yā na'i rjes brang rnam kyi bsam gtan kho na la gzhol bas cig char bar grags pa shes par bya'o/

[21\]](#) *Nyingma'i rgyud bcu bdun*.

[22\]](#) *Kun mkhyen zhal lung*pp527-528

[23\]](#) 'Jigs med Gling pa and Klong chen pa prefer the spelling *Ha shang* to the more usual *Hwa shang*.

[24\]](#) This appears to be a reference to the summary of the refutations of Hwa shang's position in the *sBa bzhed* (pp71-72) where it is spoken by Ye shes dbang po.

[25\]](#) This is a reference to the account of the first meeting of the two opponents before the debate had taken place. It is found in the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (see Sørensen 1994, p401 and Tucci 1978, p365), where the text has Hwa-shang casting his robe to the ground (*sa*

la brdabs) rather than shaking it (*sprugs*). The story is also found in the *sBa bzhed* (pp66-67), to which ‘Jigs-med Gling-pa’s account has a greater similarity.

Note however that while this version has Hwa shang throwing his robe to the ground (*sa la brdabs*), ‘Jigs med gling pa’s has him shaking the folds out of it (*sprugs*).

[26\]](#) *Kun mkhyen zhal lung*pp527-528: khyed cag gi ‘dod pa ha shang la lta ba nor ‘di lta bu zhig yod de snyam pa ci yang mi sems pa sgo nga lta bu’i phyogs snga ji bzhin ‘dir bkod nas brjod kyī gzhan du na sangs rgyas phal po che la sogs pa’i gsung rab mang po ha shang gi blo la bzhugs shing/ kā ma la shi las sgra rtsod dris pa’i tshe phyags shing klad la bskor ba’i brdas ‘khor ba’i rgyu dris pa na/ ber gyi thu ba gnyis sprugs nas gzung ‘dzin gyis lan bya ba’i brda lan ston nus pa sogs dbang po shin tu rnon po’i gang zag yin par bsnyon du med la/ gang dran pa med cing yid la byar med pa la so sor rtog pa’i shes rab spangs pa’i nyes pa ‘jug na skyon ‘di rgyal ba’i yum la’ang ‘jug pas don dam par ha shang gi lta ba yin min rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas kho nas mkhyen gyis gzhan gyis ma yin no/

[27\]](#) *sDe gsum snying po* p97: /slob dpon chen po ha shang gis gsungs pas de dus blo dman pa’i blur ma shong yang don la de bzhin du gnas so/

[28\]](#) Meisezahl 1985, p.294, f.435b: de nas btsan po’i zhal nas don la mi thun pa tsam mi ‘dug ste lam spyong lugs la ha shang gi chos cig char du ‘jug mchis pa’o/ dbang po yang rab sbyangs pa can gyis chos yin la/ dbang po ‘bring yan chad chos spyod bcu la skyon bskal/

[29\]](#) *Padma dkar po* p478: de yang dbang po rnon mchog gi gdul bya dga’ rab rdo rje dang/ rang byung padma indra bhū ti sogs pa ni dkyil ‘khor gyi bdag po nyid thun mong gdul bya’i snang ngor lam la ‘jug pa’i tshul bstan pa tsam yin phyir rang byung thos grol du gyur kyang/ gang zag rim gyis pa la ni/ de lta’i reg pa mi ‘gro ste/ de’i phyir skabs ‘dir yang grol ba don du gnyer ba zhig yin phyin chad/

[30\]](#) This passage is cited in ‘Jigs med gling pa’s *Ye shes bla ma* p332: gshis der phebs pa’i rnal ‘byor pa chen po rnams la rgyu ‘bras dge sdig med pa thod drang du bshad de padma dang/ bi ma la dang/ te lo pa la sogs pa bzhin no/ rang cag rnams la blos de ltar rtogs kyang goms pas thog du ma ‘phebs pas/ gshis la mi skrag cing

I have not been able to locate the passage in Klong-chen-pa’s works.

[31\]](#) The equivalence between the realisation of Chinese simultaneists and Great Perfection meditators is also asserted in the *Blon po bka’ thang*, the *gter ma* of O rgyan Gling pa (1329-1367), which has been translated in Tucci 1978

[32\]](#) See Petech 1950 for an account of this period.

[33\]](#) Ka’ thog Tshewang Norbu, *Selected Writings*, pp743-758.

Leave a Comment

Name Required

Email Required, hidden

Url

Comment

Submit

Some HTML allowed:

 <abbr title=""> <acronym title=""> <blockquote cite=""> <cite> <code>
<del datetime=""> <i> <q cite=""> <strike>

[Trackback this post](#) | [Subscribe to the comments via RSS Feed](#)

Theme: Blix by [Sebastian Schmieg](#) . [Blog at WordPress.com](#).